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Agenda item 137
Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia

Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report contains the financial performance report of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia for the period from 1 July 1998 to 30 June 1999. The General Assembly, by its resolution 52/242 of 26 June 1998, appropriated an amount of $19,439,280 gross ($18,452,580 net) for the same period. In addition, commitment authority in the amount of $1,534,400 gross ($1,426,600 net) was provided by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in a letter from its Chairman to the Secretary-General dated 11 December 1998.

Expenditures for the period totalled $20,516,000 gross ($19,525,900 net), excluding budgeted voluntary contributions in kind of $1,147,000, resulting in an overrun of $1,076,720 gross ($1,073,320 net).

The overrun resulted mainly from increased requirements for operational costs.

The action to be taken by the General Assembly in connection with the financing of the Mission is set out in paragraph 20 of the present report.

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I. Introduction

1. The United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) was established by the Security Council in its resolution 858 (1993) of 24 August 1993. The Mission's mandate has been extended by subsequent Security Council resolutions, the most recent of which was 1255 (1999) of 30 July 1999, by which the Council extended the mandate for a new period terminating on 31 January 2000.

2. The budget for the maintenance of UNOMIG for the period from 1 July 1998 to 30 June 1999 was set out in the report of the Secretary-General dated 9 February 1998 (A/52/787). It amounted to $20,743,400 gross ($19,756,700 net), inclusive of budgeted voluntary contributions in kind amounting to $2,294,000. It provided for the maintenance of up to 135 military observers, 62 international staff and 95 locally recruited staff. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, in paragraph 14 of its report of 31 March 1998 (A/52/860/Add.2), recommended that the General Assembly appropriate $18,449,400 gross ($17,462,700 net) for the period from 1 July 1998 to 30 June 1999.

3. The General Assembly, by its resolution 52/242 of 26 June 1998, appropriated an amount of $19,439,280 gross ($18,452,580 net) for the maintenance of UNOMIG for the period from 1 July 1998 to 30 June 1999, inclusive of $989,880 for the support account for peacekeeping operations. This amount has been assessed on Member States.

4. In a letter to the Chairman of the Advisory Committee dated 2 December 1998, the Controller informed the Committee that vigorous efforts had been made to improve the safety of UNOMIG staff, including the purchase of 10 additional ballistic-protective vehicles at an estimated cost of $1.1 million. That action had been recommended by the Secretary-General in his report to the Security Council dated 10 June 1998 (S/1998/497) and supported by the Council in a letter dated 10 July 1998 from the President addressed to the Secretary-General (S/1998/633). At that time, the Controller instructed that every effort be made to absorb the cost of the additional vehicles within the approved budget of UNOMIG for the period from 1 July 1998 to 30 June 1999.

5. The Controller added that in a subsequent report, dated 29 October 1998 (S/1998/1012), the Secretary-General had informed the Security Council that there had been further incidents in the mission area that directly endangered the safety and security of UNOMIG personnel. The most serious incident involved an ambush on a UNOMIG bus, resulting in injuries to several military and civilian staff. The Secretary-General had therefore proposed an increase in the number of internationally recruited personnel along with the logistical support necessary to provide internal security to the Mission's installations. The President of the Security Council, in a statement dated 25 November 1998 (S/PRST/1998/34), had stated that the Security Council welcomed the efforts of the Secretary-General aimed at improving the security of UNOMIG.

6. The Controller pointed out that, taking into account the absorption of the cost of the vehicles and the Mission's prorated share of the cost of the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi, Italy, it would not be possible to absorb the cost of the proposed additional security personnel as well in view of the fact that UNOMIG was a small mission with a modest budget. He therefore sought the concurrence of the Advisory Committee to enter into commitments in an amount not exceeding $1,534,400 gross ($1,426,600 net) for the additional staffing requirements together with their related logistical support.

7. The concurrence of the Advisory Committee was contained in a letter to the Secretary-General dated 11 December 1998. That amount has not been assessed on Member States.

8. It is recalled that the General Assembly, in its resolution 53/232 of 8 June 1999, appropriated an additional amount of $290,200 gross ($485,200 net) for the maintenance of UNOMIG for the period from 1 July 1997 to 30 June 1998. However, on the assumption that this additional requirement could be met from the unencumbered balance relating to the period from 1 July 1998 to 30 June 1999, the Assembly did not assess these amounts on Member States. Since expenditures for the period from 1 July 1998 to 30 June 1999 have exceeded the amounts appropriated by the Assembly for that period, the action to be taken in respect of the assessment of the additional amount of $290,200 gross ($485,200 net) required for the period from 1 July 1997 to 30 June 1998 is included in paragraph 20 of the present report.

II. Implementation of the budget

9. During the reporting period, UNOMIG continued to operate in an unstable security environment. UNOMIG personnel and property were subjected to acts of violence by armed individuals. As indicated above, there were a number of incidents that endangered the safety and security of UNOMIG personnel, necessitating changes in operational plans. Those incidents included the murder of an international secretary at her private accommodation, the throwing of grenades into the UNOMIG headquarters compound in Sukhumi on three occasions, two car hijackings and the ambush of a clearly marked UNOMIG bus in the centre of Sukhumi on 21 September 1998. On that occasion a military observer was seriously injured by gunfire, and substantial medical expenses have been incurred for his ongoing treatment.

10. In view of the precarious security situation in the mission area, UNOMIG continued to review the security arrangements in place at all locations where mission personnel were deployed. As a result of this review, strict security arrangements were put in place to limit the movement of vehicles and personnel during the evening hours, the reopening of the team bases was postponed, and UNOMIG assets were relocated to Zugdidi instead of Sukhumi as originally planned. Mainly because of the closure of the team bases, the number of military observers deployed was maintained below the authorized strength of 135. To further improve the security of personnel, the 10 additional ballistic-protected vehicles that had been purchased were deployed, bringing the number of such vehicles in the mission area to 25. Furthermore, additional security personnel (17 international and 37 local) were deployed to provide internal security to the Mission's installations.

11. The shooting incident of 21 September 1998 prompted many staff members to leave UNOMIG sooner than the expected end of their assignment and also discouraged others from joining the Mission. This, therefore, created vacancies, especially during the first six months of the period under review. However, this development also made it possible to cover much of the cost associated with the deployment of the additional security personnel with funds appropriated for civilian personnel.

12. The decision to keep the team bases closed and to restrict movement significantly reduced the mileage on UNOMIG vehicles, resulting in substantial savings in fuel consumption.

13. The establishment of a new logistics base at Zugdidi required substantial resources for renovation, travel and temporary help. The establishment of this facility, along with the ongoing security threat and the fact that UNOMIG had been experiencing interference with its radio communications, precipitated major efforts to upgrade the Mission's communication system, thereby incurring a sizeable increase in capital spending.

14. Another factor affecting the implementation of the budget was the decision by the Government of Switzerland to withdraw its voluntary contribution in-kind of a fixed-wing aircraft effective 31 December 1998. As a result, UNOMIG was forced to charter a fixed-wing aircraft within existing resources in order to continue to provide operational support.

15. It can be seen, therefore, that the changes in operational plans had a significant direct and indirect impact on the implementation of the budget, and in particular on non-recurrent expenditures, which increased from the $1,018,000 budgeted to $2,984,200.

16. Finally, in order to carry out its mandate effectively, UNOMIG actively sought surplus assets from the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi and other peacekeeping missions to improve its services. These additional assets, valued at $1.8 million, significantly improved the capacity of the Mission's logistical functions on the one hand, but also increased freight charges significantly beyond the amount budgeted.

17. Six Coordinating Council meetings were held during the reporting period. These were supported primarily by allocations from the Trust Fund for Negotiations to find a Comprehensive Settlement of the Georgian/Abkhaz Conflict.

III. Financial performance report for the period from 1 July 1998 to 30 June 1999

18. As indicated in table 1, an amount of $19,439,280 gross ($18,452,580 net) was appropriated for the maintenance of UNOMIG for the period from 1 July 1998 to 30 June 1999. The related expenditures amounted to $20,516,000 gross ($19,525,900 net), inclusive of $2,298,900 in unliquidated obligations. The overrun of $1,076,720 gross ($1,073,320 net) represents, in gross terms, 5.5 per cent of the amount appropriated.

Table 1
Apportionment and expenditure
(Thousands of United States dollars)

Category of expenditure	*Apportionment*	*Expenditure*[a]	*Variance*
Military personnel	4 761.0	3 479.5	1 281.5
Civilian personnel	8 153.6	8 201.1	(47.5)
Operational costs	4 498.6	6 675.1	(2 176.5)
Other programmes[b]	49.5	21.7	27.8
United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi	-	158.6	(158.6)
Support account for peacekeeping operations	989.9	989.9	-
Staff assessment	986.7	990.1	(3.4)
Gross requirements	**19 439.3**	**20 516.0**	**(1 076.7)**
Income from staff assessment	(986.7)	(990.1)	3.4
Net requirements	**18 452.6**	**19 525.9**	**(1 073.3)**
Voluntary contributions in kind (budgeted)	1 147.0	1 147.0	-
Voluntary contributions in kind (non-budgeted)	-	-	-
Total resources	**20 586.3**	**21 663.0**	**(1 076.7)**

[a] Includes an amount of $2,298,900 in unliquidated obligations.

[b] Excluding personnel.

19. Information on the deployment of military observers and civilian personnel during the reporting period is given in table 2 and annex III.

Table 2
Authorized staffing, incumbency and vacancy rates for military and civilian personnel for the period from 1 July 1998 to 30 June 1999

Personnel category	*Authorized strength*	*Actual strength (average)*	*Vacancy rate (percentage)*
Military observers	135	99	27
International staff	62	56	10
Local staff	95	93	3

IV. Action to be taken by the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session

20. The actions to be taken by the General Assembly in connection with the financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia are:

(a) To assess an amount of $290,200 gross ($485,200 net) for the maintenance of UNOMIG for the period from 1 July 1997 to 30 June 1998 in addition to the amount

of $18,580,500 gross ($17,582,100 net) already assessed for the same period in accordance with Assembly resolution 51/236 of 13 June 1997;

(b) To appropriate an additional amount of $1,076,720 gross ($1,073,320 net) from the amount of $1,534,400 gross ($1,426,600 net) authorized by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions under the provisions of section IV of Assembly resolution 49/233 A of 23 December 1994 for the period from 1 July 1998 to 30 June 1999;

(c) To assess on Member States the additional amount mentioned in subparagraph (b) above.

Annex I

Financial performance report for the period from 1 July 1998 to 30 June 1999: summary statement

(Thousands of United States dollars)

Category of expenditure	*(1)* *Apportionment* [a]	*(2)* *Non-recurrent expenditures*	*(3)* *Total expenditures (inclusive of non-recurrent expenditures)*	*(4) = (1 - 3)* *Variance*
I. Military personnel				
1. Military observers	4 694.1	-	3 426.4	1 267.7
2. Military contingents	13.8	-	-	13.8
3. Other requirements pertaining to military personnel				
(a) Contingent-owned equipment	13.1	-	13.1	-
(b) Self-sustainment	-	-	-	-
(c) Death and disability compensation	40.0	-	40.0	-
Subtotal, line 3	53.1	-	53.1	-
Total, category I	**4 761.0**	-	**3 479.5**	**1 281.5**
II. Civilian personnel				
1. Civilian police	-	-	-	-
2. International and local staff	8 153.6	-	8 201.1	(47.5)
3. United Nations Volunteers	-	-	-	-
4. Government-provided personnel	-	-	-	-
5. Civilian electoral observers	-	-	-	-
Total, category II	**8 153.6**	-	**8 201.1**	**(47.5)**
III. Operational costs				
1. Premises accommodation	621.4	271.9	641.5	(20.1)
2. Infrastructure repairs	30.0	46.5	46.5	(16.5)
3. Transport operations	1 435.1	1 596.2	2 336.1	(901.0)
4. Air operations	874.7	7.0	1 046.3	(171.6)
5. Naval operations	-	-	-	-
6. Communications	503.6	630.9	970.8	(467.2)
7. Other equipment	415.5	431.7	541.2	(125.7)
8. Supplies and services	515.1	-	879.2	(364.1)
9. Air and surface freight				
(a) Transport of contingent-owned equipment	-	-	-	-
(b) Commercial freight and cartage	103.2	-	213.5	(110.3)
Subtotal, line 9	103.2	-	213.5	(110.3)
Total, category III	**4 498.6**	**2 984.2**	**6 675.1**	**(2 176.5)**

Category of expenditure	(1) Apportionment[a]	(2) Non-recurrent expenditures	(3) Total expenditures (inclusive of non-recurrent expenditures)	(4) = (1 - 3) Variance
IV. Other programmes				
1. Election-related supplies and services	-	-	-	-
2. Public information programmes	22.5	-	6.1	16.4
3. Training programmes	27.0	-	15.6	11.4
4. Mine-clearing programmes	-	-	-	-
5. Assistance for disarmament and demobilization	-	-	-	-
Total, category IV	**49.5**	**-**	**21.7**	**27.8**
V. United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi	**-**	**-**	**158.6**	**(158.6)**
VI. Support account for peacekeeping operations	**989.9**	**-**	**989.9**	**-**
VII. Staff assessment	**986.7**	**-**	**990.1**	**(3.4)**
Gross requirements, categories I-VII	19 439.3	2 984.2	20 516.0	(1 076.7)
VIII. Income from staff assessment	**(986.7)**	**-**	**(990.1)**	**3.4**
Net requirements, categories I-VIII	18 452.6	2 984.2	19 525.9	(1 073.3)
IX. Voluntary contributions in kind (budgeted)	**1 147.0**	**-**	**1 147.0**	**-**
X. Voluntary contributions in kind (non-budgeted)	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Total	**20 586.3**	**2 984.2**	**21 663.0**	**(1 076.7)**

[a] Based on appropriation provided in General Assembly resolution 52/242.

Annex II

Supplementary information on significant variances

Military personnel

Apportionment: $4,761,000; expenditure: $3,479,500; variance: $1,281,500

1. The unutilized balance of $1,281,500 under this heading resulted from lower requirements for military observers ($1,267,700) and military contingents ($13,800).

Military observers

Apportionment: $4,694,100; expenditure: $3,426,400; variance: $1,267,700

2. The unutilized balance of $1,267,700 under this heading resulted primarily from the decision not to deploy fully the military observers nor to reopen team bases. Because of the unstable security environment there was an average monthly deployment of 99 observers compared with the authorized strength of 135.

Military contingents

Apportionment: $13,800; expenditure: none; variance: $13,800

3. The apportionment was to provide for the purchase of ration packs to be held in reserve for emergency use by the Mission. Existing stocks were adequate and the shelf life remained valid.

Civilian personnel

Apportionment: $8,153,600; expenditure: $8,201,100; variance: ($47,500)

4. The average monthly vacancy rate was 10 per cent among the international staff and 3 per cent for the local staff. The additional requirement of $47,500 arose primarily from costs associated with the deployment of 54 additional civilian security personnel (17 international and 37 local) and the hiring of additional local personnel for relocation of the logistics base from Pitsunda to Zugdidi. It was possible to absorb most of those costs because of the high vacancy rate among international staff resulting from the unstable security situation.

Operational costs

Apportionment: $4,498,600; expenditure: $6,675,100; variance: ($2,176,500)

5. The additional requirements under this heading resulted from higher requirements for premises/accommodation ($20,100), infrastructure repairs ($16,500), transport operations ($901,000), air operations ($171,600), communications ($467,200), other equipment ($125,700), supplies and services ($364,100) and freight ($110,300).

Infrastructure repairs

Apportionment: $30,000; expenditure: $46,500; variance: ($16,500)

6. Additional requirements were attributed primarily to the fact that the actual cost of bridge repairs was higher than anticipated.

Transport operations

Apportionment: $1,435,100; expenditure: $2,336,100; variance: ($901,000)

7. The additional requirements under this heading are a direct result of the need to improve the safety and security of UNOMIG personnel and installations. The additional vehicles purchased included 10 ballistic-protective vehicles and transport vehicles for the additional security personnel, as explained in paragraphs 4 and 6 of the main report.

Air operations

Apportionment: $874,700; expenditure: $1,046,300; variance ($171,600)

8. The additional requirements under this heading represent primarily costs incurred for the charter of a replacement aircraft following the withdrawal on 31 December 1998 of the fixed-wing aircraft previously provided as a voluntary contribution in kind.

Communications

Apportionment: $503,600; expenditure: $970,800; variance: ($467,200)

9. The additional expenditures under this heading were due to several urgent operational requirements. They included a year 2000-compatible switchboard ($122,909), multiplexers/modems ($224,079) and digital microwave links ($88,765). These purchases were necessary to replace outdated equipment, upgrade existing facilities and provide connectivity to the newly established logistics base at Zugdidi.

Other equipment

Apportionment: $415,500; expenditure: $541,200; variance: ($125,700)

10. Additional requirements of $125,700 under this heading included office furniture and equipment such as filing cabinets, replacement photocopiers and fax machines for some locations and safes to improve cash safety and provide storage for weapons of newly arrived security personnel. This amount also includes $79,300 for the purchase of year 2000-compliant computers. The original number of computers that were not year 2000-compatible was erroneously reported as 65 desktops and 30 laptops; the actual number was 96 desktops and 42 laptops.

Supplies and services

Apportionment: $515,100; expenditure: $879,200; variance: ($364,100)

11. The additional requirements under this heading related mainly to medical expenses incurred in connection with the injury of a military observer during an attack on the UNOMIG bus on 21 September 1998. He is receiving ongoing treatment.

Air and surface freight

Apportionment: $103,200; expenditure: $213,500; variance: ($110,300)

12. Additional requirements arose in connection with the shipment of equipment and vehicles from the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi, Italy, the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan and the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium/Civilian Police Support Group.

Other programmes

Apportionment: $49,500; expenditure: $21,700; variance: $27,800

13. The unutilized balance resulted under public information programmes and Training.

Public information programmes

Apportionment: $22,500; expenditure: $6,100; variance: $16,400

14. Activities under this heading were limited because no public information officer was deployed during the period.

Training programmes

Apportionment: $27,000; expenditure: $15,600; variance: $11,400

15. Fewer training programmes were undertaken owing to vacancies in the Mission.

United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi

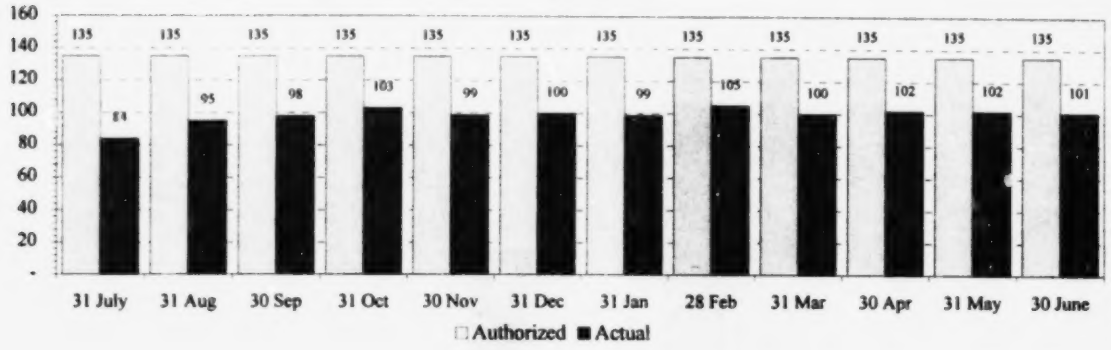
Apportionment: none; expenditure: $158,600; variance: ($158,600)

16. The expenditure of $158,600 represents the Mission's prorated share of the cost of maintaining the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi for the reporting period, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 52/1 B of 26 June 1998.

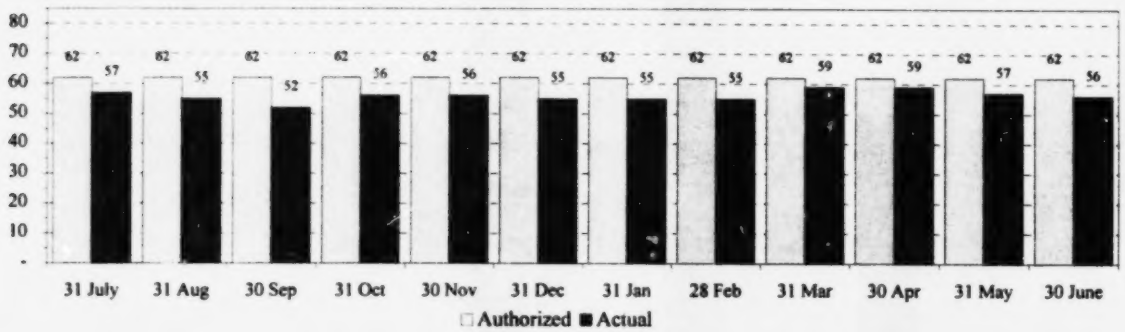
Annex III

Planned and actual deployment of military and civilian personnel for the period from 1 July 1998 to 30 June 1999

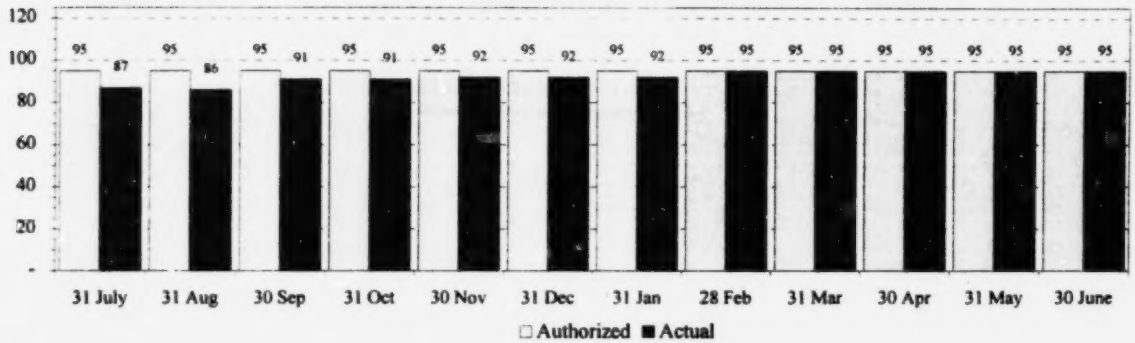
1. Military observers



2. International staff

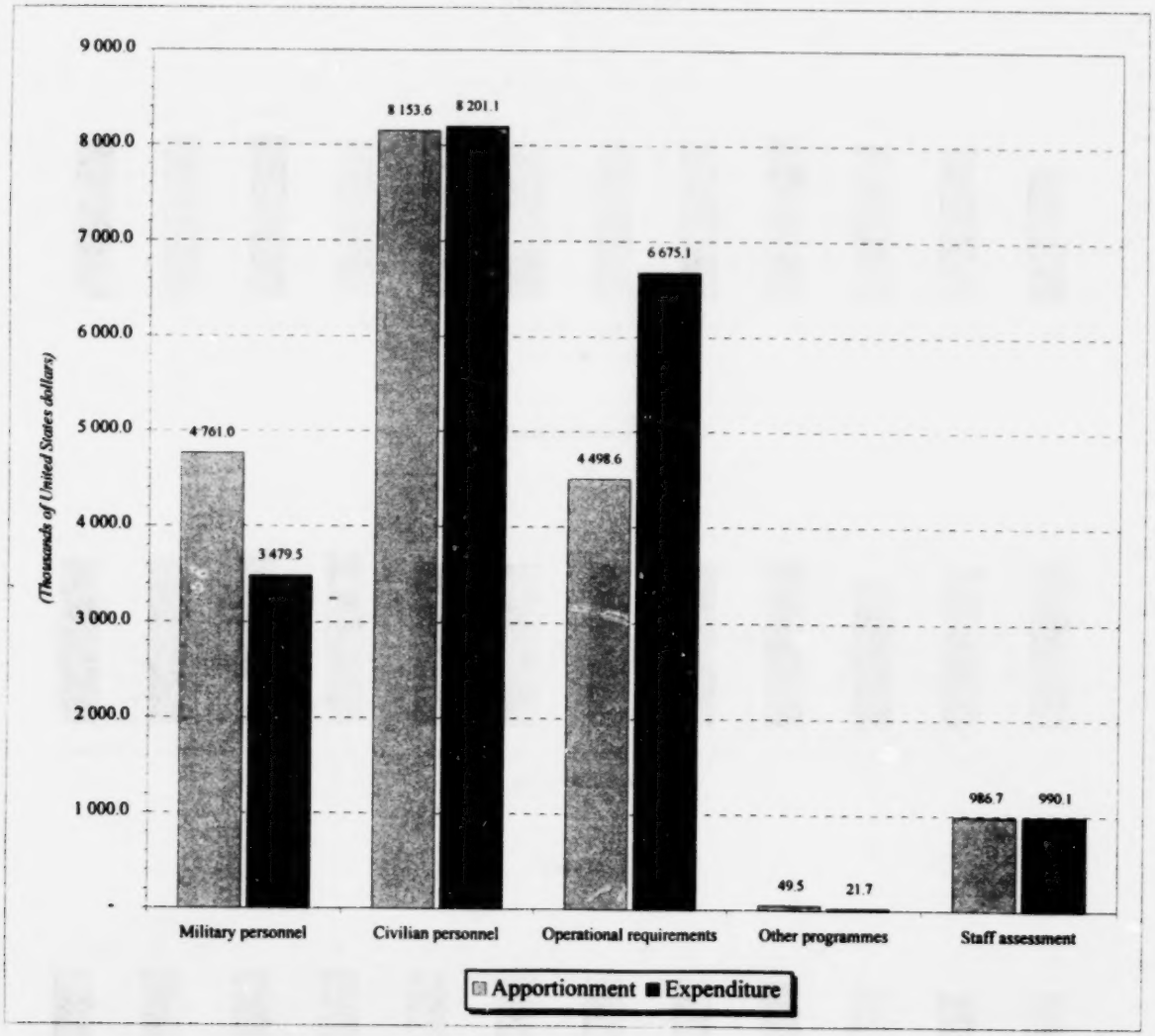


3. Local staff



Annex IV

Apportionment and expenditure for the period from 1 July 1998 to 30 June 1999



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Fifty-fourth session
Agenda items 28, 39 and 116 (a)

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization

Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies

Human rights questions: implementation of human rights instruments

Letter dated 26 January 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Turkmenistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you the text of the Declaration on the foreign policy of Turkmenistan in the twenty-first century based on permanent neutrality and the principles of peaceableness, good-neighbourliness and democracy, adopted by the People's Council of Turkmenistan on 27 December 1999 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda items 28, 39 and 116 (a).

(Signed) Aksoltan **Ataeva**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
of Turkmenistan to the United Nations

00-26603 (E) 100200 140200

Annex

Declaration on the foreign policy of Turkmenistan in the twenty-first century based on permanent neutrality and the principles of peaceableness, good-neighbourliness and democracy, adopted by the People's Council of Turkmenistan on 27 December 1999

[Original: Russian]

We, the members of the People's Council, the highest representative organ of people's power in Turkmenistan,

Adhering to the fundamental and inviolable principles of the national statehood of the Turkmen people and neutral Turkmenistan's peace-oriented foreign policy, which are based on the ideas and practical activities of Saparmurat Turkmenbashi, the first President of Turkmenistan and the recognized leader of the nation,

Recalling the age-old Turkmen traditions of friendship and good-neighbourliness, peace and justice and equality and goodwill, and also in the name of the further triumph of the ideas of democracy, humanism and respect for human rights and freedoms, which are contained in the Constitution of Turkmenistan and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

Expressing confidence in the future of the people of Turkmenistan, the further strengthening and well-being of the Turkmen State as an integral and sovereign part of the world community of nations,

Noting the importance of the place and role of neutral Turkmenistan in the global changes taking place on the threshold of the third millennium, which have a decisive impact on prospects for the development of the world community and international relations,

Recognizing the coming challenges of the third millennium facing mankind and considering that, in the new historical circumstances, international security is becoming increasingly indivisible and dependent on the concerted efforts and proportionate responsibility of all States in ensuring its sustainability,

Desiring to make our contribution to the confirmation in the twenty-first century of the principles of humanism and justice in international relations, the non-violent settlement of disputes and conflicts, and recognizing that the United Nations is an important and effective mechanism for maintaining peace and international stability,

Relying on the unshakeable foundations of our foreign policy, which is based on the universally recognized status of Turkmenistan as a permanently neutral State,

Expressing our full support for the policies of Saparmurat Turkmenbashi, the President of Turkmenistan, both within the country and in the international arena, which have ensured the harmonious transformation of Turkmen society and are oriented towards the twenty-first century,

Proclaiming this Declaration,

State the following:

1. Since it became an independent and sovereign State, Turkmenistan has taken its well-deserved place among the community of nations, and has demonstrated in practice the correctness of its chosen path of development, which combines national traditions and the achievements of modern civilization. Over the past period, which is short by historical standards, Turkmenistan under the leadership of President Saparmurat Turkmenbashi has withstood difficult tests with honour and has been accepted as part of the international community not only as a sovereign and secular State but also with the universally recognized status of permanent neutrality.

In Turkmenistan's foreign policy, developed and carried out under the leadership of Saparmurat Turkmenbashi, the first President of Turkmenistan, the international community has witnessed the emergence of a qualitatively new model in the practice of international relations. Turkmenistan has proposed to the world the concept of peaceful and stable coexistence and development in the complex Central Asian region.

Turkmenistan's foreign policy was unanimously supported by the world community meeting as the General Assembly of the United Nations, which on 12 December 1995 adopted a special resolution on the permanent neutrality of Turkmenistan. That significant date heralded the beginning of a new era in the formation and development of Turkmenistan's foreign policy. The General Assembly's adoption of a special resolution was a token of the international community's recognition of Turkmenistan's peace-oriented foreign policy and its constructive role in international affairs.

The confirmation of Turkmenistan's status of permanent neutrality resolved the strategic task of safeguarding its national interests as an independent subject of international relations. At present, the concept of neutrality has become firmly rooted in our life. Turkmenistan has proclaimed December 12 a national holiday, the Day of Neutrality.

Remaining true to its declared foreign policy and its international obligations arising from its neutral status, independent Turkmenistan has not participated in a single armed conflict and has not joined any military or military-political alliance or bloc or any international organization whose activities go beyond the provision of humanitarian assistance.

2. We declare with confidence that the choice made in the first days after Turkmenistan gained its independence was very timely and correct and the best possible model for the development of Turkmenistan's foreign policy. That solved the strategic problem of safeguarding the national interests of Turkmenistan as an independent subject of international relations. The foreign policy of neutrality, based on strict and unconditional compliance with the spirit and letter of the Turkmen Constitution, the Charter of the United Nations and Turkmenistan's international obligations, has gained prestige for Turkmenistan authority and won the confidence of other States, particularly neighbouring States, and has enabled it to create favourable domestic conditions for external stability and sustainable development.

The neutral model of Turkmenistan has fully justified itself, and the basic characteristics of Turkmen neutrality, particularly from the point of view of its maintenance, have stood the test of time and created an international atmosphere

conducive to the implementation of large-scale programmes for the internal development of Turkmenistan.

Neutrality has been and will remain the immutable fundamental principle of Turkmenistan's foreign policy, and the maintenance of that policy is the foundation on which Turkmenistan intends to build its relations with all States and international organizations in the next century.

3. Turkmenistan's policy of permanent neutrality goes far beyond the framework of one country. It has become a vital factor for ensuring regional stability and is geared towards the creation of conditions for peaceful dialogue and cooperation among States. A number of United Nations documents stress that Ashgabat, the capital of Turkmenistan, has in fact become a peacemaking centre, a place for holding peace talks and major international forums. This is the constructive aspect of Turkmen neutrality, which is demonstrated by the fact that Turkmenistan seeks to ensure not only internal but also external stability and is prepared to contribute to any peacemaking process and dialogue in the name of peace and accord.

4. The priorities of Turkmenistan's foreign policy have been and remain the country's domestic interests and the solution of its social and economic problems. That policy must be in keeping with fundamental national interests and address the most basic and urgent tasks facing the Turkmen people which are, first of all, those of maintaining sovereignty and independence, safeguarding the statehood of Turkmenistan, defending its territorial integrity and creating conditions for stability and the irreversibility of political and economic reforms.

Neutral Turkmenistan's foreign policy, which is the logical continuation of its domestic policy, is an example of the implementation of Saparmurat Turkmenbashi's concept of the transition of a traditional Asian society to a new and democratic one. Turkmenistan's neutrality has fostered the creation of a social and political atmosphere that has facilitated the gradual formation of the basic components of a democratic society in Turkmenistan. This involves the creation of:

- a culture of democracy among the people, based on centuries-old traditions and taking into account the values of modern civilization;
- respect for the law, the authorities, the citizen and the human person as a whole;
- the basis for the economic independence of each individual, the elimination of people's dependence on one another as a result of official, social and other positions in society;
- a real social and economic basis for democratic ways of thinking and behaving by guaranteeing the well-being of each family and individual;
- an atmosphere of confidence in the future among people and society as a whole, which allows for the implementation of reforms without "shock therapy" and ensures that they are geared to meet social needs.

5. A priority area of Turkmenistan's long-term foreign policy is its cooperation with the United Nations. The United Nations is not only the rostrum from which States have an opportunity to expound their views on matters of concern to them. Turkmenistan shares the opinion that the United Nations must become the

principal and irreplaceable mechanism for ensuring universal peace and security and the highest international authority for the settlement of disputes and conflicts, and the Charter of the United Nations must become the foundation for the world order of the twenty-first century. Turkmenistan believes that its principal task as a full Member of the United Nations is to promote in every way possible the enhancement of the Organization's consolidating potential and the expansion of its peacemaking activities, and to support its humanitarian initiatives and its specialized agencies. To this end, Turkmenistan will continue to cooperate actively with the United Nations and its bodies and agencies, helping them to meet their programme goals and fulfil their mandates. Turkmenistan's national United Nations Association will facilitate the effective implementation of this task.

Turkmenistan acknowledges the primacy of international law and the supremacy of the basic instruments of the United Nations and its Charter in international affairs and will remain committed to their scrupulous application. Recognized by the United Nations as a permanently neutral State, Turkmenistan guarantees strict and unconditional compliance with the international obligations that it has assumed in this regard.

6. Bilateral cooperation has been and remains a priority of Turkmenistan's foreign policy. That is why the most important element of that policy in the next century will be, first of all, the further strengthening of cooperation with neighbouring States with a view to creating an atmosphere of peace, harmony and good-neighbourliness in the region. Turkmenistan believes that conditions for the genuine well-being and progress of the region's peoples can be ensured only through mutual trust, non-interference in internal affairs, observance of territorial integrity and sovereignty, and respect for each country's choice of its own model of socio-political and socio-economic development.

Turkmenistan enters the twenty-first century with clearly defined priorities for bilateral cooperation with neighbouring countries, which are reflected in its Long-term Programme of Cooperation to the Year 2010.

The Asian region, where Turkmenistan is situated, a region where there are a number of internal conflicts, has, without a doubt, enormous potential for development. The most important prerequisite for realizing this potential is the prospect of fruitful cooperation among the peoples of the region, the heirs of a rich centuries-old culture and deep-rooted historical traditions of peaceableness and good-neighbourliness. They have more than once demonstrated their ability to find ways of reaching agreement and reconciliation, while rejecting any forcible interference from without.

Turkmenistan is committed to the dynamic growth of regional cooperation, which has been confirmed by the Economic Cooperation Organization's resumption of its activities. The countries members of the Economic Cooperation Organization, with a total population of over 310 million, have emerged as an influential subject of international relations, which at the same time testifies to the birth of a new regional community, which logically corresponds to the historical laws of the cultural unity of kindred peoples. The logic of cooperation among the countries members of the Economic Cooperation Organization for the rebirth of the region and the well-being of its peoples is fully in keeping with the basic principles of Turkmenistan's neutrality. The continuation of the "open-door" policy will remain the cornerstone of Turkmenistan's foreign economic strategy.

In the twenty-first century, Turkmenistan will remain, in its regional policy, steadfastly committed to the principles of neutrality, non-interference in the affairs of neighbouring countries, non-use of military force, active peacemaking under United Nations auspices, good-neighbourliness and cooperation.

Basing itself on conventional norms and international practice, Turkmenistan is enacting legislation that will permit foreign nationals to move freely throughout its territory.

7. In the next century, Turkmenistan intends to continue to carry out its "open-door" economic strategy. The challenges facing mankind on the threshold of the millennium, which include a worsening energy crisis, the inequitable distribution of resources, and food shortages, are fraught with serious consequences that threaten to undermine national and regional security and stability, and pose the danger of entire peoples' and continents' irrational and insufficient perception of their own fate. In this context, Turkmenistan considers that its main task in its foreign economic activities is to bring its important resources, particularly energy resources, to international markets.

Turkmenistan has consistently supported a multifaceted approach to the development of the international energy pipeline infrastructure based on economic expediency, and the elaboration of the principle of complementing — rather than replacing — one project with another. At the same time, in its consideration of any projects, Turkmenistan is in favour of maintaining a balance of interests among, and ensuring the mutual advantage of, all the parties involved, and creating an international legal mechanism to safeguard the interests of suppliers, transit countries and consumers. Turkmenistan categorically rejects the use of pipelines as an instrument of political pressure and economic diktat.

The permanent neutrality of Turkmenistan is the most important guarantee of the influx of foreign investments and international banking capital into the country's economy. Since its independence, and particularly after Turkmenistan acquired the status of permanent neutrality, there has been a steady trend towards the constant growth of investments flows into the country for the purpose of modernizing such key branches of the economy as the oil and gas industry, the textile industry, construction, transport and communications. Turkmenistan guarantees the security and protection of foreign contributions and investments and the conformity of its legislation with the most modern international standards.

8. Turkmenistan's neutrality is based on its deep commitment to the universal ideals of humanism and democracy, which have been developed by modern civilization, to the distinctive democratic traditions of the Turkmen people, which have been shaped by history, and to its moral priorities and political and social experience.

The highest value of Turkmen society is the human person. The proclamation of the primacy of the person and his rights and freedoms with respect to other social values is one of the most important principles of Turkmen statehood. As a neutral, democratic, secular and constitutional State, Turkmenistan reaffirms its international commitments to safeguard basic human rights and freedoms and is prepared to continue to support the efforts of States and the international community to prevent and mitigate the consequences of humanitarian catastrophes, natural disasters,

epidemics, wars and conflicts and to cooperate with world and regional humanitarian organizations.

Proceeding from the logic of Turkmenistan's measures to ensure the strict conformity of its national legislation with progressive international norms and standards, which arises from its neutral status, the Khalk Maslakhaty (People's Council) declares Turkmenistan's accession to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 15 December 1989, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty. This will constitute further confirmation of Turkmenistan's commitment as a State that observes the principles of humanism, democracy and protection of human rights and freedoms in practice and in principle.

The improvement of Turkmenistan's democratic institutions is based on the consistent expansion of the rights and functions of representative government. The recent national elections to the Mejlis (Parliament), which took place on a broad democratic basis, demonstrated that Turkmen society was ready for the progressive introduction of the principles of parliamentary government, self-regulation and rejection of extremist and radical methods of reforming society.

The evolution of the Turkmen model of democracy is based on the harmonious combination of the universal and the particular in global processes. Just as the modern values of democracy are by nature universal, so each people and ethnic group have their own unique character. The combination of the universal and the particular forms the basis of Turkmenistan's approach to the transformation of society. Turkmenistan is developing its statehood on the basis of the supremacy of the Constitution, respect for the law, and commitment to democratic values and rights and to guarantees of a normal life for all citizens. Democratic norms are inseparably linked with the national interests of the State and are its most important component. Turkmenistan adheres to these positions today and considers them essential to the priorities of its political development in the coming century.

Neutral Turkmenistan, headed by its political leader, the guarantor of constitutional and democratic development, the country's first President, Saparmurat Turkmenbashi, enters the third millennium with faith in itself and the highest ideals of mankind. It is convinced of the irreversibility of progress, the triumph of the ideals of peaceableness, justice, goodness, human reason and the strength of the human spirit. History is giving the peoples of our planet a chance to lay the foundations of a new, humane world order. They must take advantage of this chance. The people of independent neutral Turkmenistan, together with all the united nations, is ready to embark on this noble mission.